

RAINHILL PARISH COUNCIL – MINUTES
17th November 2014

At a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Parish Council held on Monday 17th November 2014 at Rainhill Village Hall, the following were present:

Cllrs: B. Almond, J. DeAsha, M. Donovan, B. Heydon, C. Moore and W.M. Wood.

001. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr J. Carroll.

002. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

003. ACCOUNT BALANCES, INCOME EXPENDITURE & RESERVES

The Clerk gave a report on the half-year current account balance including a summary reconciliation figures for each month of the half-year.

The Clerk suggested all Councillors on the Unity Trust Bank authorisers list make a point of authorising transactions from time to time so that they remain familiar with process.

The Clerk presented a report on income, expenditure and reserves pointing out the possible increased exposure to large costs. It was resolved that the Council will budget for a gradual increase in reserves to meet both the costs of planned capital projects and any large impromptu needs. It was further resolved that Election Reserves be frozen at £11,000 until the cost of next year's elections are known.

Following a resolution in September, authorising use of Direct Debits in principle, it was resolved that utility bills for the open space facilities at Holt Lane and Rainhill Park would now be paid by this method.

004. PRECEPT

The Clerk was instructed by the Council on the approach to be taken in preparing a budget paper to determine the 2015 Precept and given parameters to work within. It was resolved that a final decision on the Precept amount will be made at the 19th January 2015 meeting. Sufficient funds needed to be raised to meet the expected expenditure. Given previous frugality in maintaining a low precept, significant percentage rises would not produce high financial increases and were considered warranted.

005. RISKS

The Clerk summarised potential financial risks, highlighting that notification had been received from St.Helens Council that they would no longer meet the cost of external maintenance on the changing facilities at Holt Lane and Rainhill Park. Together with this new expenditure, contributions towards other schemes, previously undertaken jointly, could no longer be relied upon, due to cuts in district council's budget. Maintenance of St Ann's churchyard had now passed to St.Helens Council.

006. 4F CENTRE

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Cllr DeAsha gave a brief update on the status of the 4F Centre informing the Council that whilst resources had diminished, sufficient funds were available to remain operational.

The Parish Council had provided a grant of £5,500 in June 2014 and agreed a contingency of £4,500 towards running costs. Cllr DeAsha acknowledged the Parish Council's contributions and thanked them for their support.

007. VILLAGE HALL GRANT

Last year the Village Hall grant had been reduced by 2.5% from £11,536 to £11,248, with a view to this figure being reviewed each year. In response, the Village Hall Management Committee had initiated more fund raising events with some success.

The Parish Council acknowledged the efforts being made to reduce reliance on the grant and confirmed that continued support would be provided.

It was resolved that the grant to the Village Hall for 2015/16 will be reduced by 2% from £11,248 to £11,023, but acknowledged that additional support would be available if needed. It was further resolved that the Village Hall Management Committee be advised of the new amount immediately, to give them as much notice as possible of the change, and also be advised that further annual re-assessments will be made at this same time each year.

008. PROJECTS FINANCIAL UPDATE

Heritage Townscape Initiative

Work had commenced on visiting local business to assess the level of interest in a Heritage Townscape funding bid. The Initiative had received a very positive response and it was considered that funding should be included in the budget for match funding contributions for environmental works.

Holt Changing Rooms

It was recognised that funding needed to be raised for replacement changing rooms at Holt Lane. Alternative methods of obtaining finance needed to be assessed. As further discussion was required, this item was deferred to the next ordinary meeting of the Council on 15th December 2014.

Eco Garden, Exchange Place

Following completion of the establishment of the Eco Garden, future maintenance would be the ongoing financial consideration. The Parish Council confirmed their commitment to future support though no immediate assistance was needed. The Parish Council would also consider supporting other similar ventures by the group.

Remembrance Service

The cost of road closure procedures had been met by Council Improvement Fund for the past two years, however, future payments were not assured. Cllr DeAsha would speak to

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St.Helens Council Officers regarding options for future years. It was resolved to make a donation of £25 to Royal British Legion.

Red Telephone Kiosks

The Clerk confirmed that BT had no plans to decommission the operational telephone kiosk at View Road. The Clerk was instructed to write to BT regarding the condition of the operational kiosk, and request repairs. The Clerk was able to confirm that the Parish Council had adopted the decommissioned box and appropriate paperwork would be sought.

009. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was resolved that the next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 15th December 2014, starting at 7:30pm, the venue being Rainhill Village Hall. The meeting would be preceded by a presentation by the Railway & Heritage Group at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8:26 pm.

Chair of the Parish Council
15th December 2014